

Nadal up and running in quick time

Thiem and Tsitsipas' campaigns cut short; Nishikori and Pliskova make the third round

US OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

Rafael Nadal launched his tilt at a fourth U.S. Open title on Tuesday with a swift defeat of John Millman as other leading seeds in his half of the draw tumbled out in the first round.

Four players in the world's top 10 — Dominic Thiem, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Karen Khachanov and Roberto Bautista Agut — lost to ease Nadal's potential path to the final.

The Spanish second seed — champion in 2010, 2013 and 2017 — needed barely two hours to see Millman off 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 at Arthur Ashe Stadium with the World No. 60 from Australia unable to reproduce the magic that saw him stun Roger Federer here a year ago.

"The beginning, the first match, is always a little bit new even if I've played here plenty of times," said Nadal. "I think I played well and in general am very happy with the way I started."

Two-time French Open runner-up Thiem was upset by Italian giant-killer Thomas Fabbiano 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, the Austrian fourth seed slumping to another first-round exit, having lost at the same stage at Wimbledon.

Finding fault

Greek eighth seed Tsitsipas struggled with cramps and accused umpires of having "preferences" after he fell to a 6-4, 6-7(5), 7-6(7), 7-5 defeat by Next Gen rival Andrey Rublev in a gruelling four-hour slog.

Tsitsipas, for whom it was also a second successive Grand Slam opening-round

defeat, was hit with a point penalty for a time violation in the final set.

Russian ninth seed Khachanov lost to Canada's Vasek Pospisil in five sets, with 10th seed Bautista Agut of Spain succumbing in similar fashion to Mikhail Kukushkin of Kazakhstan to leave that quarter of the draw wide open for Nick Kyrgios.

The volatile Australian eased past American Steve Johnson 6-3, 7-6(1), 6-4 in a match that finished at 1:12 a.m. local time.

Alexander Zverev, seeded sixth, outlasted Moldova's Radu Albot 6-1, 6-3, 3-6, 4-6, 6-2, while Marin Cilic, the 2014 champion, advanced in straight sets over Slovakia's Martin Klizan.

Wimbledon champion Simona Halep, ousted in the opening round the past two years at Flushing Meadows, beat US lucky loser Nicole Gibbs 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Former champion exits

Sloane Stephens, the 2017 champion, slid to a 6-3, 6-4 loss to Russian qualifier Anna Kalinskaya.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, past U.S. Open runners-up Kei Nishikori and Karolina Pliskova advanced to the third round when most matches were delayed by showers.

Japanese seventh seed Nishikori, the 2014 runner-up and a semifinalist in 2016 and 2018, defeated American Bradley Klahn 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 after two hours and 44 minutes.

Czech third seed Pliskova, seeking her first Grand Slam title and the top ranking, ousted 202nd-ranked Georgian qualifier Mariam Bolkvadze 6-1, 6-4.



Giant-killer: Thomas Fabbiano produced one of the big upsets by taking out fourth seed Dominic Thiem on Tuesday. • AP

IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Second round: 7-Kei Nishikori (Jpn) bt Bradley Klahn (USA) 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5. **First round:** Andrey Rublev (Rus) bt 8-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) 6-4, 6-7(5), 7-6(7), 7-5; 24-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt Richard Gasquet (Fra) 6-4, 6-3, 2-6, 6-2; 13-Gael Monfils (Fra) bt Albert Ramos (Esp) 7-6(2), 6-4, 6-3; Denis Shapovalov (Can) bt 18-Felix Auger-Aliassime (Can) 6-1, 6-1, 6-4; Pablo Andujar (Esp) bt 30-Kyle Edmund (GBR) 3-6, 7-6(1), 7-5, 5-7, 6-2; Thomas Fabbiano (Ita) bt 4-Dominic Thiem (Aut) 6-4,

3-6, 6-3, 6-2; 6-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Radu Albot (Mda) 6-1, 6-3, 3-6, 4-6, 6-2; 29-Benoit Paire (Fra) bt Brayden Schnur (Can) 6-2, 6-4, 6-4; 20-Diego Schwartzman (Arg) bt Robin Haase (Ned) 6-3, 7-6(6), 6-0; Tennys Sandgren (USA) bt Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (Fra) 1-6, 6-7(2), 6-4, 7-6(5), 7-5; Vasek Pospisil (Can) bt 9-Karen Khachanov (Rus) 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, 4-6, 6-3; 14-John Isner (USA) bt Guillermo Garcia-Lopez (Esp) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 32-Fernando Verdasco (Esp) bt Tobias Kamke (Ger) 6-3, 3-6, 6-1,

6-2; 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt John Millman (Aus) 6-3, 6-2, 6-2; 28-Nick Kyrgios (Aus) bt Steve Johnson (USA) 6-3, 7-6(1), 6-4.

Women: Second round: 3-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt Mariam Bolkvadze (Geo) 6-1, 6-4. **First round:** Magda Linette (Pol) bt Astra Sharma (Aus) 6-3, 6-4; Timea Babos (Hun) bt 28-Carla Suarez Navarro (Esp) 6-2, 0-0, ret.; 21-Anett Kontaveit (Est) bt Sara Sorribes (Rou) bt Nicole Gibbs (USA) 6-3, 3-6, 6-2; Aliona Bolsova

(Esp) bt 31-Barbora Strycova (Cze) 6-3, 0-6, 6-1; 19-Caroline Wozniacki (Den) bt Wang Yafan (Chn) 1-6, 7-5, 6-3; 15-Bianca Andreescu (Can) bt Katie Volynets (USA) 6-2, 6-4; Alison Riske (USA) bt 24-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) 2-6, 6-1, 6-3; 25-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Jil Teichmann (Sui) 6-2, 6-2; 23-Donna Vekic (Cro) bt Richel Hogenkamp (Ned) 7-6(4), 6-3; 9-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt Victoria Azarenka (Blr) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Anna Kalinskaya (Rus) bt 11-Sloane Stephens (USA) 6-3, 6-4.

PASSING SHOTS



Uninspired Tsitsipas lashes out at umpire

Stefanos Tsitsipas called an umpire a "weirdo" after being told to hurry back onto court during his first-round loss to Andrey Rublev on Tuesday and later said he was struggling for inspiration in his game. "You are the worst. For some reason, you have something against me, I don't know what. Because you're French probably. And you're all weirdos. You're all weirdos," the 21-year-old shouted. REUTERS



'Grown-ups do grown-up things': Stephens

Sloane Stephens refused to be drawn into a spat with Monica Puig after coach Kamau Murray split with the Puerto Rican to reunite with the former US Open winner recently. "I've seen some of the things that were said. I think that grown-ups do grown-up things. We should leave it in the past and we should move on. It doesn't have anything to do with me, so... Her side is her side," Stephens added. AFP



Nadal offers boat to Murray for Mallorca stay

Rafael Nadal revealed on Tuesday he had offered to provide Andy Murray with his boat in Mallorca, where the Scot is playing in a second-tier Challenger event as part of his comeback following hip surgery. "I'm very happy to have Andy Murray playing there," Nadal said. "It's great news for us... I just texted him a couple days ago saying, 'If you need anything, just let me know. You want to go out with the boat or anything, I can help you, just let me know'." AFP

Riske's Bollywood dance moves, a superhit

Alison Riske has made her name in tennis, but her biggest claim to fame might be the Bollywood dance moves from her wedding last month that became an internet sensation. Riske, playing in her first Grand Slam after getting married to Stephen Amritraj, the son of former India tennis player Anand Amritraj, said: "The whole weekend was awesome, just to have everyone that we love together — it was really special. There were so many highlights. I think my Bollywood dance went off well."

After blow on neck, Smith thought of Hughes

"These things happen and unfortunately missed what was a pretty amazing Test"

THE ASHES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

Australian batting mainstay Steve Smith thought about his late teammate Phil Hughes right after being hit on the neck by England pacer Jofra Archer in the second Ashes Test.

Bit of past

"I had a few things running through my head, particularly where I got hit, just a bit of past came up, if you know what I mean, from a few years ago. That was probably the first thing I thought about," Smith told reporters in Derby referring to Hughes who passed away after being hit by a bouncer in a 2014 Sheffield Shield match.

Smith was found to have delayed concussion.

"It wasn't until later that evening that it hit me. When the doc asked me what did it feel like I said it felt like I had six beers last night and felt a little bit under the weather, without the six beers unfortunately."

"That was the sort of feeling I got, that groggy feeling



Eerie feeling: Steve Smith recalled that following the nasty blow off Jofra Archer, it felt like he had had too much alcohol. • AFP

and that stuck around for a couple of days. Not a nice place to be in but these things happen and unfortunately missed what was a pretty amazing Test match," he said.

With Ben Stokes playing one of the best Test match innings, England pulled off a one wicket win in Leeds, levelling the five-match series at 1-1.

'Not going to change'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

Steve Smith is expecting a lot of short balls to be directed at him in the fourth Test, but said he will not change the way he bats against Archer.

"If they're bowling up there it means they can't nick me off, or hit me on the pad or hit the stumps. With the Dukes ball, I don't know, that's an interesting ploy. I'm not changing anything."

Paul replaces Cummins for Jamaica Test

IAN'S
ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)

All-rounder Keemo Paul has replaced fast bowler Miguel Cummins in the West Indies' 13-member squad for the second Test against India, starting on Friday in Jamaica.

Paul, who missed the first Test due to an ankle injury, is now available for selection, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) said in a statement.

The squad: Jason Holder (captain), Kraigg Braithwaite, Darren Bravo, Shamarh Brooks, John Campbell, Roston Chase, Rakheem Cornwall, Jahmar Hamilton, Shanon Gabriel, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Keemo Paul, Kemar Roach.

Haryana Steelers' merry run continues

Facile win over Fortunegiants pushes them to the third spot

PKL

ANANT KAUR
NEW DELHI

Haryana Steelers, with Vikas Kandola excelling again, defeated Gujarat Fortunegiants 41-25 for its third win here on Wednesday. Apart from attack, Fortunegiants were also overpowered by Steelers' defence.

Kandola (eight points), Prashanth Kumar Rai (eight points) and Ravi Kumar, with a High 5 (six tackle points), led an all-round performance from the Steelers, which moved them to the third spot.

Three minutes into the game, Gujarat was reduced to five men but a successful



Doing his bit: Vikas Kandola scoring a point for Haryana Steelers. • SANDEEP SAXENA

raid by Abolfazl Maghsodlumahalli put Dharamaraj Cheralathan and Vikas Kale out. In the process Fortunegiants' Maghsodlumahalli registered 150 points in the

PKL and Rohit Guila 150 raid points.

It took 15 minutes for the Giants to get their first tackle point of the match, when Rituraj Koravi tackled Kan-

dola. Thrice in the match Steelers inflicted an all-out on Fortunegiants. The first half score saw Steelers leading 20-11.

When play resumed, Guja-

rat got it's first super tackle point when Gurnath More tackled Kandola, sending him to the bench. In the process More registered 150 points in the league.

It was apparent Steelers were dragging Giants to a defeat, leading 38-18 with just six minutes left.

Steelers was down to just one man with 16 seconds remaining but that didn't matter because they had already sealed the win.

The results: Haryana Steelers 41 (Vikas Kandola 8, Prashanth Kumar Rai 8) bt Gujarat Fortunegiants 25 (Abolfazl Maghsodlumahalli 4, Gurnath More 4).

Dabang Delhi 40 (Naveen Kumar 11, Ravinder Pahal 8) bt U Mumba 24 (Arjun Deshwal 7, Sandeep Narwal 6).

#throwback



Hefty congratulations: P.T. Usha shared a photograph of a young Sindhu sitting on her lap. '@Pvsindhu! success will inspire generations to come!' • P.T. USHA/TWITTER